CCH12

August 10, 1939

Circular Letter No. 12

To: Superintendents of Schools, Principals of Elementary Schools, and Teachers of English

Re: THE ENGLISH PROGRAM IN THE ELEMENTARY GRADES

Ladies and Gentlemen:

To guide you in formulating and carrying out your plans for the coming school year, we wish to offer the following suggestions and recommendations:

1- Assignments of Teachers of English

1. Teachers of English are appointed to teach English and other subjects taught in English. Under no circumstances should they be assigned to teach subjects which are not taught in English.

2. All teachers of English should be assigned to classroom work. Under no circumstances should they be assigned to do any other type of work.

3. We suggest that teachers of English be assigned to teach in the following grades:

a. Continentals

(1) Grades I, II, III, IV, V, VI. Only those Continentals whose temperaments and personalities are fitted for work with small children should be assigned to teach in the primary grades.

(2) Grades V, VI, VII, VIII. Those Continentals whose termperaments and personalities are fitted for work with older children should be assigned to teach in these grades.

b. Locals

(1) Grades VII and VIII.

(2) Grades I, II, III, IV, V, VI. When the number of Continental teachers of English allotted to a school is not sufficient to teach English in the first six grades, please assign to these grades Local teachers possessing the best command of the English language.

4. When the number of teachers of English allotted to a school is not sufficient to teach English in all groups, arrangements to secure the assistance of the room teachers should be made in the following way:

   a. In groups where English is not taught by teachers of English, arrange to have this subject taught by the best room teachers available. This can be accomplished through the departmental plan. Do not, however, give a full program of English classes to a teacher of this category.

   B. Room teachers who are quite able to teach English and are not needed for the plan suggested above, may be allowed to teach English in their own groups.

II- Tentative Outlines for Grades I to VIII

The tentative outlines which were sent to the schools last year will be used again this year. Certain slight modifications in and additions to these outlines will be made during the first semester of the coming school year.

Teachers may feel free to devise classroom techniques and teaching procedures which will vitalize and make possible assimilation of the materials contained in these outlines. Teachers may feel free also to improve them, but they are not authorized to lessen their scope.

III- Direct Method of Teaching English

After having made a careful evaluation of the methods of teaching English used in our elementary schools, we found that pupils who were taught by the direct method learned and could use more correct English than those who were taught by another method. We recommend, therefore, that the direct method of teaching English be used exclusively in all the elementary grades. Spanidh should be used only when it is absolutely necessary for the teacher to do so; that is, in the teaching of abstract words, in extreme emergencies only.

IV- Lists of Pupil Errors

Lists of errors most commonly made by pupils in oral and written language should be carefully compiled and used by the teacher as the basis for drill exercises and class discussion. Said lists should be filed in the superintendent's or principal's office and copies of them should be sent to the Department of Education at the end of each ten week period, instead of at the end of each six week period. Please prepare these lists in the following way:

1. Information concerning each grade should be written on a separate sheet of paper and the words should be listed in alphabetical order.

2. On a separate sheet of paper, list the number of teachers submitting reports and the grades they teach.

V- Redistribution of Basic Textbooks Already In Use

This Department belives that a more equitable distribution can be made of the basic textbooks in use in our rural and urban-elementary schools. We feel that by assigning to a given class sufficient copies of one series of basic textbook so that every pupil or every second or third pupil may have a copy, instead of assigning in insufficient quantities two or three different series of basic textbooks, more tangible and effective results can be obtained from the pupils. For example: to one fifth grade class assign enough copies of the Elson Basic, Book III so that every pupil or every second or third pupil may have a copy; to another fifth grade class assign enough copies of Now and Long Ago so that every pupil or every second or third pupil may have a copy; to another fifth grade class, assign enough copies of the Children's Own Readers so that every pupil or every second or third pupil may have a copy. Superintendents are hereby requested to carry out this redistribution as soon as possible. No usable textbooks should be kept in the storerooms; they should be assigned to the teachers for classroom use.

As soon as this redistribution of basic textbooks has been made, please send to this Department a report showing how many basic textbooks would be needed in your district if we were to give each pupil a copy of the book being used in his respective class. In preparing this report, please use the following form:

District _____

Grade	No. of Groups	Enrollment rural & urban	Basic Textbooks					
			Elson		Now and Long Ago		Children's Own Readers	
			On Hand	Need	On Hand	Need	On Hand	Need
V	10	500	200	40	100	30	100	30

_____
Superintendent's Signature

VI- Language-Activity Workbooks

We are planning to introduce into the school system a language-activity workbook, which will be sent to your during the first weeks of the coming school year. A Circular Letter concerning the use and distribution of these workbooks will be sent to you in the very near future.

VII- Improvement of Teaching Through Teacher Growth

In order to provide for teacher growth, we hereby recommend that the following activities be carried out:

1. Institutes.- We suggest that each superintendent plan to have an Institute during the first school month, for the purpose of orienting the teachers of English in matters pertaining to the English program.

   We also suggest that Institutes be held twice each semester.

2. Demonstration Classes.- We recommend that demonstration classes be given for groups of teachers as well as for individual teachers.

3. Visiting Days.- Superintendents and principals are requested to urge the weak teachers to take advantage of the one visiting day a semester granted to them by the Department, so that they may improve themselves professionally by classroom observation.

Supervisory officials are requested to follow as closely as possible the suggestions and recommendations made in this Circular Letter.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) O. B. IRIZARRY CALDER
Acting Commissioner of Education